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Author(s): Arthur Judson Brown

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THE NEW JAPAN

*By Arthur Judson Brown, D.D., Secretary Presbyterian
Board of Foreign Missions*

Japan is in some respects one of the most attractive countries in the world. One who has visited it can never forget the charm of its hospitality, the neatness of the homes and villages, and the courageous energy with which the people are grappling with their new and difficult problems. Evidences of the new life which is stirring the nation are apparent on every hand. Tokyo, the intellectual and political center of the nation, has become one of the influential cities of the world. Osaka is the center of the new industrial Japan and there the commercial and manufacturing enterprises of the country may be seen on a large scale. The occasional traveler too often neglects this city, which is one of the most distinctive cities of modern Japan. Kyoto continues to be the artistic and Buddhistic heart of Japan. One does not expect to see much change in the sacred Shinto city of Yamada, or the shrines and temples of scenic and historic Nikko; but even there the traveler finds indications of progress. The new highway, three miles in length, connecting the two Shinto shrines at Yamada, is not surpassed by any road in Europe. Everywhere the traveler is charmed by the beauty of the scenery. Japan is a land of mountains and valleys, of streams and gardens. A journey through it is a succession of delights to the lover of nature, and even the humid heat of a Japanese August can be uncomplainingly borne when one can look upon scenes worth going far to see.

The contrast between Japan of today and the Japan which I found ten years ago is not so immediately apparent as one might imagine. Visibly there is comparatively little change. The charm of the Japanese scenery is still unmarred, save in a few places, by the crass materialism which in America lines our railways with huge signs advertising cathartics, bile beans,

soothing syrup, and pale pills for pink people. Japanese architecture is the same, save here and there a new public building is of foreign style. Increasing numbers of educated men wear European dress; but the native garments still predominate on the streets. The railway service is excellent; but the jinrickisha still awaits the traveler at every station, and the bare legged runner swiftly draws him over the smooth streets between the long rows of shops with their picturesque signs. The visitor can easily find external signs of changing conditions if he looks for them; and in some instances they obtrude themselves. Nevertheless, Japan, to the eye, is still Japan—the most beautiful land of northern Asia.

But as one moves among the people, he becomes conscious of subtler changes. Ten years ago, I found a militant Japan. The people had not recovered from their rage and chagrin over Russia's seizure of Port Arthur and Manchuria, thus depriving them of the hard-won fruits of the China-Japan war of 1894. The nation was thinking of revenge. It realized too that Russian aggressions must result in war. It was therefore drilling soldiers, building warships and accumulating military stores.

The Japan of today is not less militant than the Japan of former years. It understands perfectly that the Russians will not permanently acquiesce in the stinging defeat which was inflicted upon them. The Japanese know that the Koreans hate them and that the Chinese are jealous of them. They know too, that many foreigners throughout the Far East are suspicious of them. They discern, moreover, that the position which they have now won in the world in general and in the Far East in particular is one which can be held only by military force. The Japanese, therefore, are maintaining an army and navy at a high stage of efficiency. They do not need as large a standing army as some other nations, for in Japan practically every able-bodied man receives military training, and after his return to civil life, is amenable to his country's call at any time. One hears many stories to the effect that enormous stores of munitions of war are being accumulated. It is difficult to tell how far this is true; but no one doubts that

the Japanese are keeping themselves in first-class military condition just as the British, the Germans and the French are keeping themselves, and as a strong party wishes to keep the United States. All this is natural as conditions now are.

But Japan, while not less military, is more commercial than formerly. It understands war is a costly business. It spent \$585,000,000 in the Russian-Japan war, and the nation is staggering under the enormous debt of \$1,125,153,411, or \$21.50 per capita. People have to pay from 20 to 30 percent of their incomes for taxes and a Tokyo paper (the *Kokumin Shimfun*) says that "the heavy debts of Japan are more than the nation can endure." Japan realizes that its material resources are greatly inferior to those of most other first-class powers, and that the position and ambitions of the nation require wealth as well as an army and navy.

The Japanese cannot get this wealth by agriculture; for not only is Japan a comparatively small country territorially but only about 12 per cent of its area is easily susceptible of cultivation. It is a land of hills and mountains. The valleys are unusually rich, but they are not extensive and there are no vast stretches of rich prairie soil like those in Manchuria and the western part of the United States.

So the Japanese have entered upon a period of commercial and industrial development. They have studied to good effect the example of England and are trying to make themselves a manufacturing people. Trade is being fostered on a large scale. Factories, the best modern machinery, extensive shipping interests, and great business enterprises testify to the zeal with which the Japanese are entering the sphere of commercial activity. When one considers the contempt with which trade was regarded by feudal Japan only a few decades ago, he is amazed by the skill and persistence with which the new Japan is striving for the mastery in the markets of the world. It is not easy for the white races to compete with them. The Japanese already lead in the trade of the Pacific ocean, and dominate that of Korea and Manchuria. They are competing with foreign and Chinese steamship lines on the Yang-tze River to Hankow, planting colonies in every

port city of the Far East, and running their steamships to Europe, America, India and Australia.

The advantages of Japan in this commercial rivalry are short haul, cheap labor, control of transportation lines both by land and sea, and government subsidies. Several of the great enterprises of modern Japan are controlled either directly or indirectly by the Government. In some instances, the government owns them outright; in other instances high officials and members of the Imperial Family are heavy stockholders. The *Financial Economic Annual*, issued by the Government, states that in 1905, out of a total of 4,783 miles, the state owned and operated 1,531 miles of railway. By the railway nationalization law and the railway purchase law, passed in March 1906, the Government acquired ownership and control of all the lines in the country, with the exception of a few of relatively little importance. Its holdings now represent about 90 per cent of the total mileage. Payment for the lines purchased is to be made by public loan bonds aggregating nearly \$250,000,000. The Japanese people are moving as a unit in the furtherance of their commercial ambitions. The business man does not have to fight alone for foreign trade, as the American tradesman must. He has the backing of the nation. Allied industries support him. Shipping companies give him every possible advantage. He is, to use an American term, a part of an immense "trust," only the trust is virtually a government instead of a corporation.

I heard much criticism of Japanese commercial methods. European and American business men spoke with great bitterness of their unfairness. They alleged that Japanese firms obtain railway rebates; that transportation lines are so managed that Japanese firms have their freight promptly forwarded while foreign firms are subject to ruinous delays; that foreign labels and trade marks are placed upon inferior goods, so that it is difficult to sell a genuine brand to an Asiatic, as the latter believes that he can get the same brand from a Japanese at a lower price. They also alleged that foreign traders in Manchuria are compelled to pay full duties upon all goods, but that the Japanese, through their absolute

control of the only railway, are able to evade the customs. It was said that of \$12,000,000 worth of Japanese goods which went into Dairen in a single year, only \$3,000,000 worth paid duty. For a long time, Japanese goods were poured into Manchuria at An-tung on the Yalu River. Then foreign powers encouraged the Chinese to place an inspector of the Imperial Chinese Customs at An-tung. The Japanese could not oppose this, but they did their best to have a Japanese inspector chosen. An American in the customs service, however, was appointed. His experience in endeavoring to enforce the laws against the Japanese would make interesting reading, if it is ever published.

The rage and chagrin of European and American business men in the Far East can better be imagined than described. A disgusted foreigner declared to me that there is not a white man in the Far East, except those in the employ of the Japanese, who are friendly toward them, and that their dominant characteristics are "conceit and deceit." He denied not only the honesty but even the courage of the Japanese, insisting that the capture of Port Arthur was not due to the bravery of the assailants, but to the incompetence of the defenders. He said that the Russian soldiers were as heroic as any in the world; but that their officers were drunkards and debauchees, and that the war department, which should have sustained them, was rotten with corruption. He stated that at the battle of Liao Yang, both Russian and Japanese generals gave the order for retreat at about the same time, each feeling that the battle was lost; but that the Russian regiments received their order first, and that as the Japanese saw them retreat, they moved forward. He held that the anti-Japanese agitation in the public schools of San Francisco was secretly fomented and made an international incident by the Japanese themselves, in order to divert attention from what they were doing in Manchuria; and more to the same effect.

I have cited these opinions as they are illustrative of many that I heard in the Far East. I need hardly say that I regard them as unjust. Their very bitterness indicates the prejudice which gave some of them birth and added exaggeration to others. Even if they were all true, the Japanese

are simply doing what it is notorious that some American corporations have been doing for years. Rebates, adulteration, evasion of customs, short weight, unfair crushing of competitors, and kindred methods, are not so unfamiliar to Americans that they need lift hands of holy horror when they hear about them in Asia.

The fact is that the white trader has had, until recently, his own way in the Far East. He has cajoled and bullied and threatened and bribed the Asiatic to his heart's content and his pocket's enrichment. He has dominated the markets, charged what prices he pleased, and reaped enormous profits. When he has gotten into trouble with local authorities, he has called upon his government to help him out of the scrape. The story of the dealing of western nations in Asia includes some of the most disgraceful incidents in history. Now, for the first time, the white man finds himself face to face with an Asiatic who can beat him at his own game. The Japanese are commercially ambitious and want those rich markets for themselves. They are going after them and getting them. It is rather late in the day for white men to go into paroxysms of grief and indignation over commercial methods they themselves have long practiced. I do not mean to be understood as excusing such methods in the Japanese or anyone else. I am simply calling attention to the fact that the Japanese are a strong, alert, aggressive and ambitious people, who have precisely those ambitions for supremacy which characterize white men.

The Japanese are developing almost as much of a colonizing spirit as the Chinese. Like the latter, they are seeking distant lands, and like them, too, they are succeeding in them. The pressure in population of Japan has already been noted. The Empire had 37,017,362 inhabitants in 1883; 39,607,254 in 1888; 41,388,313 in 1893; 43,763,855 in 1898; 46,732,807 in 1903; 48,649,583 in 1906; and it now has over 50,000,000 exclusive of Formosa and Korea. The cost of living is rising. The limit of the soil productiveness has been reached and Japan has to import food for her people. In a recent year she purchased abroad 4,296,418 piculs of rice, chiefly from China, Siam and Burma, and 4,294,267 piculs of beans, the

latter largely from Manchuria. She bought flour in the United States to make bread for her troops during the war, and her imports of this staple in the following year cost \$1,819,166. It will readily be understood that possession of Formosa, Korea and Lower Manchuria and a strong navy mean the very life of the nation.

Japan's new and rapidly enlarging foreign trade also involves the residence in other lands of some of her subjects. There is a large Japanese population in Korea, Manchuria, Formosa and the Hawaiian Islands, and an increasing one in the ports of China. The Japanese population in the United States was 71,712 in 1909 and is probably about the same now.

A discussion of the problem of Japanese emigration to the United States does not fall within the scope of this article. The agitation in California and the national complications that ensued are well known. Lest we be misled by newspaper reports about the danger of having "great numbers of Japanese men sitting beside little American girls" in the schools of San Francisco, we may recall the result of inquiries by Mr. George Kennan, as published in the *Outlook* of June, 1907. He found that of 28,736 pupils in the public schools of San Francisco, only 93 were Japanese; that 28 of these were girls; that 34 of the boys were under fifteen years of age; that of the 31 over fifteen years of age, only two were as old as twenty, and that the average age of the rest was seventeen. All but six were in grades with Americans of the same age. The number of "Japanese men sitting beside little American girls" therefore consisted of just six youths under twenty, and these were divided among four schools—one in each of three schools and three in the other.

The story of moral and spiritual development in Japan is replete with interest. It is difficult to realize that when Dr. James Hepburn arrived in Japan in 1859, he was not permitted to preach; and that the only opportunity he could find to do anything, except literary work in his own study, was to teach English to a few boys whose fathers were desirous of having them learn the leading language of Western nations. Now the Rev. Allen Klein Faust, Ph.D., in his

Christianity as a Social Factor in Modern Japan, says that there are 1,031 foreign missionaries in Japan, 1,847 Japanese ministers, evangelists, missionaries and teachers; 161,228 communicant members of churches, and half a million adherents. That is, 1 in every 100 of the population is an adherent of Christianity, and 1 in every 320 is a baptized communicant. These figures include the Greek and Roman Catholic and Protestant Missions. Protestants have 186 schools with 17,664 students; Roman Catholics 51 schools with 6,183 students; and Greek Catholics 3 schools with 328 students.

The influence of Christianity is far greater than these figures would indicate. In most countries, Christianity made its first converts among the lower strata of society, but in Japan it has won its greatest successes among the Samurai or knightly class, the class which has furnished the majority of the army and navy officers, journalists, legislators, educators, and leading men generally of the new Japan. It can readily be understood, therefore, that the Japanese churches have a strength out of all proportion to their numbers. Fourteen members of the Lower House are Christians. A former President of the House was a Presbyterian elder. Christians may be found among the influential men in almost every walk of life. At the semi-centennial Conference in 1909, the Rev. Dr. Imbrie said:

Fifty years ago, notice-boards were standing on the high-ways declaring Christianity a forbidden religion; today these same notice boards are seen standing in the museum in Tokyo as things of historical interest. Fifty years ago, religious liberty was a phrase not yet minted in Japan; today it is written in the constitution of the nation. Less than fifty years ago, the Christian Scriptures could be printed only in secret; today Bible societies scatter them far and wide without let or hindrance. Fifty years ago, there was not a Protestant Christian in Japan; today they are to be found among the members of the imperial diet, the judges in the courts, the professors in the imperial university, the editors of influential newspapers, the officers of the army and navy.

Count Okuma, former prime minister of Japan, in a remarkable address at the same conference, is reported in the *Japan Daily Mail*, October 9, 1909, as follows:

He was glad of this opportunity to express a word of hearty congratulation to those who were assembled to celebrate this semi-centennial of Christian work in Japan. Though not himself a professed Christian, he confessed to have received great influence from the creed, as have many others throughout Japan. This is a most important anniversary for the country. It represents the work of one whole age in our history, during which most marvelous changes have taken place. He came in contact with, and received great impulses from, some of the missionaries of that early period, particularly from Dr. Verbeck, who was his teacher in English and history and the Bible, and whose great and virtuous influence he can never forget. Though he could do little direct evangelistic work then, all his work was Christian, and in every thing he did, his Christian-like spirit was revealed. The coming of missionaries to Japan was the means of linking this country to the Anglo-Saxon spirit to which the heart of Japan has already responded. The success of Christian work in Japan can be measured by the extent to which it has been able to infuse the Anglo-Saxon and the Christian spirit into the nation. It has been the means of putting into these fifty years an advance equivalent to that of one hundred years. Japan has a history of 2,500 years, and 1,500 years ago had advanced in civilization and domestic arts, but never took wide views nor entered upon wide work. Only by the coming of the West in its missionary representatives and by the spread of the Gospel, did the nation enter upon world-wide thoughts and world-wide work. This is the great result of the Christian spirit. To be sure, Japan had her religions and Buddhism prospered greatly; but this prosperity was largely through political means. Now this creed has been practically rejected by the better classes, who spiritually thirsty, have nothing to drink. While extending congratulations upon the advance made thus far, he prayed for still greater effort and advance in the future and such advance as should be manifest in lives of lofty virtue of the Verbeck kind. To teach the Bible was all right, but to act it was better. Japan is well advanced in scientific knowledge, but head and heart are not yet on a level. Profession and conduct ought to go together. Only thus can evangelistic work be counted a success.

The secular press does not fail to note the trend, for we find in the *Japanese Advertiser* for December 25, 1910, the following editorial:

There can be no gainsaying that the Christmas season, quite apart from its religious significance, is making great headway in this country. A walk through the streets of Tokyo today gives abundant evidence of the influence of the season, for all the shops are stocked with goods that are associated with the foreign Christmas quite as much as with the Japanese new year. In the tram cars, one sees advertisements of Christmas novelties, crackers and the like, intended for the Japanese eye. Dotted throughout the city are the

Christian churches, each one of which is now engaged in celebrating the holy season with religious services, as well as sacred concerts and other entertainments suitable to the occasion. It must be conceded that Christianity is making great progress in a country where its principal festivals are coming to be accepted by the mass of the people, even if that acceptance is only concerned with the purely secular manifestations of the faith. It is a great stride forward compared to what it was only a few years ago when the attitude of the people was still antagonistic toward the religion which, together with all its associations, they regarded with contempt. Doubtless those whose memory carries them back a generation could describe vividly the changes that have come over the people in this connection.

I would not make too much of these facts. Japan is still far from being a Christian nation. The obstacles yet to be surmounted are numerous and formidable. But it is indisputable that Christian ideas are permeating the literature and the thinking of Japan to a far greater extent than is commonly realized.

I confess to a deep and sympathetic interest in the future of the Japanese. Irritating as some of their methods are, trying as it is for the proud and arrogant Anglo-Saxon to feel that at last he has met a competitor whom he cannot easily overcome, I confess that these things increase rather than diminish my respect. Here is a people whom it is worth while to reach. Are we to concentrate our activities on inferior peoples? Has America no message for the strong and masterful races of the non-Christian world? I like the Japanese the more because they are united, ambitious and aggressive. I do not defend their vices any more than I defend the vices of my countrymen; but I want to see the Japanese united with the best people of Europe and America in the service of Christ. Forces and temptations which prevail in America, but which numerous and powerful Christian churches help us to fight, are surging into Japan where the opposing forces of righteousness are still comparatively new and small. It is Christ alone that keeps the United States from utter moral lawlessness and disintegration. We ought to be profoundly concerned that the Japanese should have the same Christ to help them. I want to see Christian missions in Japan strengthened, not because I regard the Japanese as

inferiors, not because I feel that we deserve any credit for the knowledge of Christ which was brought to us from the outside, but because I regard the Japanese as fellowmen and because I know that they need the same Christ that I need.

The Japanese already have a political vision. They dream of the leadership of Asia, and they are preparing for it with a skill and energy which elicit the wonder of the world. They already have a commercial vision, and they are strenuously trying to realize it. They already have an intellectual vision and they have built up one of the best educational systems in the world. Baron Kikuchi says that 96 per cent of the children of school age in Japan are in schools, the highest percentage of any nation in the world. What Japan needs is a spiritual vision which will purify and glorify these other visions. This spiritual vision is vital to the future of Japan. Few foreigners have been so deeply in sympathy with the Japanese as the late Lafcadio Hearn; but in his chapter on "The Genius of Japanese Civilization" he wrote:

The psychologist knows that the so-called adoption of western civilization within a time of thirty years cannot mean the addition to the Japanese brain of any organs of power previously absent from it. He knows that it cannot mean any sudden change in the mental or moral character of the race. Such changes are not made in a generation. Transmitted civilization works much more slowly, requiring even hundreds of years to produce certain permanent psychological results. . . . It is quite evident that the mental readjustments, effected at a cost which remains to be told, have given good results only along directions in which the race has always shown capacities of special kinds Nothing remarkable has been done, however, in directions foreign to the national genius. . . . To imagine that the emotional character of an Oriental race could be transformed in the short space of thirty years by the contact of Occidental ideas is absurd. . . . All that Japan has been able to do so miraculously well has been done without any self-transformation, and those who imagine her emotionally closer to us today than she may have been thirty years ago, ignore the facts of science which admit of no argument.¹

The Japanese mind has long been adapted to war, to politics, and to certain kinds of industrial and scientific development. Knowledge of western methods and discoveries has simply enabled the Japanese to do more effectively and on

¹ Kokoro, pp. 16-18.

a larger scale what they had been doing after a fashion before. The spiritual realm, however, is a new world to them. Shintoism and Buddhism have not known, and therefore could not make known, a personal God. In his instructive book, *The Future of Japan*, W. Petrie Watson declares that religion, conceived as God and as a final and sufficient explanation of all phenomena, is not a Japanese notion; and that of a religion as it is conceived in Europe, there is little or none in Japan. The Japanese regard religion as subordinate in life, and the temper of their mind is such that it is usually difficult for them to acquire a just view of its authority and indispensableness in individual and national existence. His conclusion is that Japan is addressing herself to the great responsibilities of the modern world without any religion at all, in the proper sense of the term; and that the effort is pathetic and disappointing rather than heroic and inspiring, since there is no fresh beginning of history which has not been born from a new religion or from the new interpretation of an existing religion. He admires the administrative efficiency with which Japan is doing her work at present, and the splendid enthusiasm which it is bringing to its present tasks; but even savages are often recklessly brave and eagerly willing to die for their leader. There is therefore reason for profound anxiety as we study the relations which Japan has formed with the modern world and the power that she is exerting. Only as the Japanese grasp Christ's high ideals of life and build upon the solid foundation of Christ's teachings will they be able to maintain themselves as a great power. The Japanese must be brought within view of the necessity of a religious interpretation of life, ampler, clearer and more categorical than that which they have found or can find either in a religion of loyalty, or in Bushi-do, or in esoteric Buddhism, or in superstitious Shintoism. Japan can not hope to reap the results of the religion of Europe without an ultimate reckoning with their case.²

Thoughtful Japanese are beginning to see this. Various utterances of her leading men might be cited. Baron Mak-

² *The Future of Japan*, cf. especially chapters xiv, xxviii and xxx.

ino, minister of education, said to the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association: "We are greatly distressed about the moral condition of the students and the low character of the ordinary lodging houses where young men live and shall welcome whatever help the Young Men's Christian Association can do to help solve the problem." Prince Ito, in a notable address, laid down the following propositions: That no nation could prosper without material improvement; that material prosperity cannot last long without a moral backbone; that the strongest backbone is that which has a religious sanction behind it.³ Equally significant was the remark of Baron Shibusawa, the distinguished chairman of the commission of representative business men of Japan which visited the United States some time ago. In an address at a dinner in New York he declared:

Japan in the future must base her morality on religion. It must be a religion that does not rest on an empty superstitious faith, like that of some of the Buddhist sects in our land; but must be like the one that prevails in your own country, which manifests its power over men by filling them with good works.

The very solidarity of the Japanese would make their influence for Christ more powerful than that of almost any other people in Asia. The spirit of self-sacrifice which is so prominent in the Japanese character, the absolute willingness to dare and to die for the nation which hurled the Japanese corps as one man upon the fortifications of Port Arthur and enabled them to capture what probably no other army in the world could have captured, would, if pervaded and inspired by the Vision of Christ, make the Japanese among the most nobly effective peoples that the world has known. To give them the Christ who can do this is worthy of every possible effort on our part.

³ *The Japan Mail*, September 4, 1909.